

Pilot cross-appointed College Lectureship Scheme
Cambridge University and College Union (CUCU) and Graduate Union (GU)
10 June 2020

Background: the current situation

1. Undergraduate supervisions constitute a core part of the teaching offer at Cambridge University. In 2017-18, each student at the University of Cambridge received an average of 43.9 hours of supervision teaching - [see CUCU 2019](#).
2. In 2017-18, 45% of total undergraduate supervisions were provided by casualised staff, specifically graduate students (24%), postdocs (10%) or staff members categorised as 'other' (11%). These workers are treated as self-employed, they are paid only through the standard per-supervision pay rate, and they have no visibility over the amount of teaching that they will be offered in any specific year - [see CUCU 2019](#).
3. A further 13% of supervision teaching is provided by Research Fellows/Other college fellows, which might include people on Fixed-Term Contracts (i.e. Junior Research Fellows) or zero-hours contracts (e.g. some Bye-Fellows) - [see CUCU 2019](#).
4. Data collected by CUCU during a survey in 2018 demonstrated that the lack of contractual security generates significant anxiety and financial distress over casualised supervisors. Furthermore, the per-supervision pay rate has been recognised by most respondents as insufficient: 66.1% of respondents conduct three or more hours of marking and preparation for every hour of contact time, which effectively makes the per-supervision pay rate fall below the National Living Wage (£ 8.72 in 2020) - [see CUCU 2019](#).
5. The lack of job security and fair payment for casual staff who supervise is expected to be having a major impact on the quality of teaching and standards;
6. Especially in light of the COVID19 crisis, the way that the University and Colleges allocate their financial resources on teaching and supervising is likely to come under greater scrutiny than before, with an expectation from the families that the teaching provided is value for money.
7. In 2018, CUCU has launched an anti-casualisation campaign aiming at increasing job security for academic and academic-related staff employed by the collegiate university, and has sent an anti-casualisation claim to the University. Since 2019, CUCU has been in negotiations with the University over the points raised in the claim - see [summary of negotiations](#). In March 2020, CUCU casualised members voted to launch an anti-casualisation campaign targeting college teaching work.

Recommendations

1. Undergraduate college supervisions and teachings should be discussed with Colleges rather than the University, since Colleges are (a) de facto the providers of undergraduate supervisions provisions; (b) the entities to which supervisors or TAs report (see CamCORS); and (c) the payer organisations.
2. Irrespective of the potential impact of teaching opportunities on the future career progression of undergraduate supervisors (be them postgraduate students, postdoc, or freelancers), supervision teaching should be fairly remunerated and regulated by secure forms of employment.

3. Colleges should pilot a cross-appointed college lectureship scheme in the subjects that make more regular use of casualised supervisors. This would mean that colleges could pool financial and administrative resources to hire college teaching officers that could teach for more than one college. This would not only allow colleges to reduce extreme casualisation, but also to rely on more stable and foreseeable forms of teaching;
4. College lecturers hired through this cross-appointed scheme should be granted an employment contract that at least guarantees minimum working hours. No zero-hour contracts should be used, as they trigger extreme job insecurity for staff.
5. The Graduate Union and the Cambridge University and College Union should be involved in discussions about setting up such scheme.